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ABSTRACT

The Teacher Corps is now 15 years old. The program is already an important part of the history of the attempts to change American education, particularly the preservice and inservice education of teachers. During the last two years, it has embarked upon an ambitious program stressing demonstration and institutionalization of effective educational strategies. That thrust has the potential to substantially increase the impact of the program. This essay is designed to clarify the major elements of the current Teacher Corps thrust and to place it in the context of other past and current efforts to improve schooling and the preparation of teachers. Its goal is to provide Teacher Corps project personnel and others concerned with educational change with some lessons learned from educational research and evaluation, lessons which may help them to strengthen their own efforts. (JMK)

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The Continuous Process of School Improvement:

Lessons Learned from the Past

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PREFACE

This document deals with a number of important issues in teacher education. The essay provides a history of innovation over the last quarter century. Many of the innovations were from the Teacher Corps, but they have applicability to other programs as well. While many of the lessons learned are drawn from a federal program, the Teacher Corps is not the sole focus of the document. It grew out of Dr. Joyce's preparations for national and regional Teacher Corps conferences. Thus, the experiences relate to a federal program but the lessons learned apply equally to other segments of the teacher education community interested in the continuous process of school improvement.

Floyd T. Waterman
September, 1980

THE CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PAST

by
Bruce Joyce

Introduction

The Teacher Corps is now fifteen years old. The program is already an important part of the history of the attempts to change American education, particularly the preservice and inservice education of teachers. During the last two years, it has embarked upon an ambitious program stressing demonstration and institutionalization of effective educational strategies. That thrust has the potential to substantially increase the impact of the program. This essay is designed to clarify the major elements of the current Teacher Corps thrust and to place it in the context of other past and current efforts to improve schooling and the preparation of teachers. Its goal is to provide Teacher Corps project personnel and others concenred with educational change with some lessons learned from educational research and evaluation, lessons which may help them to strengthen their own efforts.

The Essential Features of the Teacher Corps

The Teacher Corps program consists of a hundred and thirty-three local coalitions which bring together school districts, colleges, and communities. While each of those local coalitions (i.e., projects) has many features which are unique to the immediate environment, each is also built around several essential Washington-initiated features. Among the latter are cultural sharing; the recruitment and development of talent for educational leadership; the development of collaboration among community members and educators; the improvement of schools; staff development; demonstration; and institutionalization.

Cultural Sharing. At one level, each coalition attempts to build a process of sharing among those in schools, communities, and higher education institutions—and to focus the energy of those human and other resources on a cluster of schools within the local education agency. The coalitions are designed to create inter-agency collaboration at an administrative level. But, more importantly, they intend to build an atmosphere in which the collaborative process reflects a real belief that the three parties, working together, can make a greater contribution to the education of children than they would if each operated alone.

At a second level, it is expected that the coalitions will embrace persons of many ethnic and cultural origins. The cultural heritages represented in each coalition are expected to be a source of enrichment to all those involved. In both project governance and curriculum, the Teacher Corps multicultural emphasis reflects both the unity and the rich diversity of this nation. The cultural sharing strategy is built on a mingling of cultures which nonetheless builds a coherent society of shared understandings—a society containing an emerging culture which does not submerge the rich and diverse origins of its citizens, but capitalizes on those differences.

To Recruit and Develop Talent for Educational Leadership. When the Teacher Corps was established in 1965, its major focus was on the recruitment and training of college

graduates to serve schools in low-income areas. Its major raison d'etre was to attract interns who would not otherwise consider teaching as a career, and to provide them with exceptional training. That training focused on building the competence and motivation of Teacher Corps interns who would help children of the poor and minorities to profit from the school experience. A large proportion of those interns was drawn from ethnic minority groups, and it was expected that many would rise to positions of leadership in education.

As the demand for new teachers lessened, each Teacher Corps project continued to recruit and train a small group of interns. Emphasis was shifted, however, to the development of those already serving in schools and on higher education faculties. Even with that changed focus, the underlying strategy of the Teacher Corps remains the same: To recruit and develop talent; to help committed people find the opportunities for training and leadership that will keep their energy focused on the improvement of education.

Historically, the task of recruiting the best-educated college graduates for service in education has been difficult. That task is perhaps even more trying where children of the poor and minorities are to be recruited. Other professional opportunities have beckoned. Education's low salaries and the field's resistance to change, combined with the seeming powerlessness of teachers and administrators, have diminished the attractiveness of education as a profession for well-educated and ambitious people. Teacher Corps addresses this problem not only by recruitment, but also by attempting to provide more vigorous training than that usually provided to teachers. The program has also attempted to create attractive, innovative settings and to encourage lasting change. Finally, the Teacher Corps has sought to make the achievements of its projects and its people much more visible, both regionally and nationally, than are the efforts of most educators.

To Create Lasting Collaboration Among Community Members and Educators. Tripartite collaboration among

community members, school personnel, and university faculty and leaders has long been a goal of the Teacher Corps. That sometimes elusive goal is now more likely to be attained on a basis of parity among the three parties, since the basic membership of local project policy boards consists of the chairperson of the community council, the local education agency's superintendent of schools, and the institution of higher education's dean of education. Further, the coalitions established in local projects are not to be temporary. They are to be the basis of new, lasting, and unified "communities of purpose" devoted to the improvement of schools and the long-term broadening of the base for decision making. Governance is to be open, inclusive, and optimistic.

To Improve Schools. The Teacher Corps's current mission is to vastly improve the climate of education in the clusters of schools in which projects work. The charge is not simply to improve the schools a little bit—to tinker with their programs—but to build the greatest schools possible, to create schools that will be models of what is possible, schools which demonstrate the excellence that *can* be achieved. Each successful Teacher Corps project is to be characterized by its unique and outstanding cluster of schools, educational institutions which attract energy and demonstrate the efficacy of coalitions.

Staff Development. Without careful tending and enlivening activity, schools tend to atrophy. School reforms are almost impossible to achieve in the absence of driving, exciting environments in which education professionals can flourish. Like marriage, teaching and schooling have to be worked at constantly; if not maintained and nutured, they will become unproductive, even unworkable. Teacher Corps projects are to generate exciting climates in which education professionals continuously study their craft, work to improve it, and find ways of making common cause with one another, their students, and community members.

Demonstration. Such schools and such systems of staff development are not simply to exist for their own sake; they

are to be laboratories for others in the surrounding area. The Teacher Corps projects are to make every possible effort to open their improvement processes to examination by others, and to serve as training grounds for those from other educational entities. Each of the 133 Teacher Corps projects works in an average of four schools; if those 133 projects each can excite ten other such units, more than 5,000 schools will be touched by the current effort.

Institutionalization. Teacher Corps projects are also asked to eschew temporary changes; they are asked to bring about the kind of difference that will permit a continuous process of school renewal. There is to be a "continuation of educational improvements" (including products, processes, and practices) made as a result of the project; that continuation is to last well beyond federal funding.

A Summary of the Mandate

The charge is direct: Teacher Corps projects are to establish coalitions which represent real and sincere collaboration among higher education, school districts, and community people. They are to recruit and develop talented people, providing them with the skills and motivation to commit themselves to education and its improvement. They are to create outstanding schools, and to generate new and effective systems of staff development as well as growing, experimenting faculty members. Projects are to demonstrate these advances to others around them and to offer themselves as places for study, experimentation, and training. And, finally, they are to attempt to bring about changes in the organizational contexts of both school districts and higher education institutions which will extend the collaborative process of school improvement into the future.

The charge is simple and clear, but exceptionally formidable. Significant change in schools is relatively easy to bring about, but lasting change is rare. Institutionalized processes which smoothly embed school improvement into normal operations are even rarer. Coalitions are difficult to establish, and even harder to maintain. Demonstration cen-

ters exist here and there, but as the history of laboratory schools attests, they tend to become normalized and less innovative as time passes.

The Teacher Corps is a part of the long attempt to establish the common school, to use it as a tool to generate equality of opportunity in society, and to enable all citizens to maximize not only their individual potential, but also the potential that is inherent in the democratic process itself. In order to understand the possibilities and challenges of that mandate, let us take a brief look at the history of education and how the Teacher Corps fits into the most salient elements of that history.

AN ERA OF EXPANSION, INNOVATION, AND CONFUSION

Between 1940 and 1970, American education expanded with incredible rapidity.[1] The teaching force increased from about one million persons to over two million. Mass production came to teacher education and sought to fill the burgeoning demand for credentialled personnel. Schools of education grew—not just enough to match the demand, but even more. One-third of preservice teacher education graduates never sought employment as teachers; another third accepted teaching jobs, but voluntarily left the profession within three years. Schools of education operated with new and inexperienced faculty members whose energy was consumed with teaching and supervising the large number of teacher candidates generated by expansion. The time devoted to professional preparation was brief, and the circumstances chaotic.[2]

School districts opened schools at a very rapid rate, often promoting teachers, counselors, and others with little experience to principalships, asking them to weld beginning teachers onto the faculties of these new schools. The suburbs simultaneously drained whites from the cities, and Gunnar Myrdal's prophetic *American Dilemma*[3] described the nightmare of segregated races.

The urban school systems slid out of the control of social

planners. The public became alarmed. Soviet achievements, children's fascination with television (and their related lessened interest in books and numbers), and the disadvantages of the peculiarly American caste system were all laid at the door of education. Wealthy suburbs and small cities protected their educational oases, lest the surrounding confusion overwhelm them.

By 1970 the pace of expansion had slowed. Educators who stayed in service grew older. The school population began to shrink. Calls for economy joined cries for quality in education. Those public concerns became major public issues. An aroused citizenry, appalled by the changes that had occurred in the United States, came to believe that schools were not only ineffective, but also much too costly. Teachers' organizations became tougher and more unified over economic issues and sought to increase their power in the struggle with public opinion. Talk of "burn-out" arose among professional educators. Teachers and administrators alike became urgently aware of their need for replenishment and nurturing. Frequently suspicious of one another and unsure that universities could help, many school people became angry about the state of inservice education and their working conditions. Supervisors and curriculum specialists became concerned that the environment for professional growth had serious shortcomings in most places.

And so was born a renewed concern. That concern combined the desire to improve schools, the recognition that schools could not be substantially improved without more rigorous community participation, and the emergence of radical changes in what has become known as the area of staff development. Two questions emerged from those conditions: How can we create a profession-wide environment which will enrich the lives of teachers and administrators, help faculties and districts enliven and continuously improve their schools, and ensure that all education professionals continuously study and enchance their craft? And, How can the organizational relationships between the community and the school be modified to ensure greater

amounts of participation by all persons concerned with the welfare of each school, at the same time creating distinctive roles for community members and professionals in an integrated, problem-oriented "community of purpose?"

Neither community members nor professionals working alone can (or do) initiate or maintain significant changes; school improvement depends on a much more broadly-based change strategy which takes cognizance of school and community relations, the ways faculties work together to solve problems, and the kind of environment that pulls each professional toward continuous and greater growth. The problems of the past should not dismay us, for many lessons have been learned. We do not come to the question of school reform or staff development without a storehouse of information and ideas.

NOW IS A HISTORY OF RICHES

The period during which schooling expanded so rapidly and optimistically was also the richest period of experimentation and development in the entire history of the common school. A large community of researchers was developed, and techniques for conducting studies of teaching and learning were vastly improved.[4] Researchers, developers, teachers, school districts, and federal and state governments generated very substantial innovative efforts which have yielded a great deal of information about teaching and schooling and how they might (and might not) be improved.[5]

The Reform Movements

The last twenty-five years have embraced an unprecedented series of attempts to improve American education. Well before Sputnik was launched, the schools were being attacked for their failure to teach the basic skills. Rudolf Flesch's book, *Why Johnnie Can't Read,* was quickly followed by suggestions that Ivan *could* read—and that something was seriously wrong with our educational system. With Sputnik came the concern that young Americans

were not acquiring the advanced academic training necessary for the competitive international life required in a technological age. The academic reform movement was developed; "new physics", "new mathematics," and other efforts to bring the work of advanced scholars into the classroom generated much excitement and controversy[6]. Academic reform generated its own species of concern; parents began to worry about whether the content of schooling would become too unfamiliar to them, and teachers were faced with the problem of studying the disciplines afresh, as well as learning new and unfamiliar teaching strategies.

Contemporaneously with the academic reform movement, questions were raised about whether the organization of schools was the best it could be. Team teaching emerged, along with a considerable variety of alternative forms of what came to be known as "differentiated staffing." The notion arose that teachers should work in teams with specialized functions and should study their craft continuously and regorously, and was accepted in many quarters. Robert Schaefer's succinct statement in *The School as a Center of Inquiry*[7] summarized the dilemma of teaching as one of operating from continuously incomplete knowledge. He reasoned that the best remedy for that state is an organization in which teachers are teamed to experiment continuously with their teaching. Teachers, he said, should try out frames-of-reference for looking at their students, and should experiment with methods--tinker with them to make them work.

Schaefer also pointed out the importance of continuing inservice education. As he put it, "We cannot wind the teacher up like an old Victrola and expect him to play sweet, cerebral music forever." Thus, with team teaching also came the idea of the clinical study of teaching, beginning the movement which today is known as clinical supervision.[8]

Coordinate with these movements, architects began to design schools which would accommodate both new forms of organization and new kinds of teaching. Some of these

schools were built around definite philosophies of teaching (For example, the Valley Winds School in Riverview Gardens, Missouri was built around concepts of multi-media storage and retrieval systems with flexible learning spaces built throughout their environments). Others emphasized learning centers which could be reoriented as philosophies of schooling changed.

The mid-sixties brought a large number of attempted social reforms in the schools. The movement to integrate the society through the redistricting of school systems began; schools were charged with trying to reunite the divided society by helping children from diverse communities learn to relate to one another. Close behind integration came the movement for multicultural education, a strategy designed to help all students understand their own and their fellow students' heritages. Mainstreaming came into existence in an attempt to integrate handicapped children into the socializing forces of the school.

The technical reform movement was also established. In Hagerstown, Maryland, a major experiment was carried on to bring television massively into the classroom. In the midwest, an airplane carried a television antenna through the skies, beaming messages to the classrooms of that vast area. Multi media data storage and retrieval systems were developed, as well as multi-media learning systems. Computer-managed systems such as "Individually Prescribed Instruction" came into existence. Simulators were built, and a vast number of simulation games were spawned and sent to the schools. In teacher education, innovations such as "mini-courses" and the use of interaction analysis proliferated rapidly. Competency-based education was developed, along with the move toward accountability and mastery learning.

Other reforms were based on the needs of society. It was asked whether "law and order" principles should be taught directly, or whether to engage in sophisticated forms of moral education. Dissatisfaction with decision-making pro-

cesses and the unsatisfactory state of community relations produced the "organizational development" movement.

Meanwhile, broad social changes affected the schools tremendously. The sheer increase in population impacted on the educational system. In the 1950s and early 1960s, schools proliferated rapidly, and hundreds of thousands of new teachers joined their faculties. In the late 1960s, the expansion of schools slowed abruptly; what had been an incredibly young teaching profession gradually became transformed into an aging cadre of experienced teachers who talked about fatigue and boredom. Simultaneously, the public which had sought and encouraged alternative forms of schooling became frightened; it gradually transformed its support into nervous suspicion.

The changes brought about by the school improvement movements were gradually eroded. John Goodlad and Frances Klein's *Looking Behind the Classroom Door*[9] describes the scene of the 1970s as one in which only residual effects of the vast number of reform movements remain. The normative bands of schooling have closed around the alternatives and squeezed most of them out.

Yet we have learned a considerable number of lessons from the reforms period. We know that it is easier to bring new materials to schools than it is to generate new teaching processes.[10] Changes which require new organizational patterns and structures are much more difficult to implement than are ones that fit comfortably within the normative structure of organizations. These lessons boil down to two important conclusions. First, community support and public feelings of joint "ownership" of innovations with teachers and other professionals are essential for successful implementation of reforms. Second, *substantial, continuous staff development is essential to the improvement of schooling and equally important to the development of the capability for the continuous renewal of education.* A static school is a dying school. Staff development is one essential ingredient of a lively, dynamic school which improves itself

through the release of a self-feeding energy born of the quest for understanding how creative teaching and learning can best take place.

We know very well how to make short-term changes in schools. Energetic people working skillfully from a technical point of view (and carefuily from a political point of view) can bring about almost any alternative model of schooling that has yet been invented. We know also that these changes, once brought about, will not persist unless there is a sustained effort in an organization which has been carefully developed and is receptive to continuing change.

Indeed, we know much better how to bring about changes than how to sustain them. We know that almost any change will be opposed by some faction or group within the profession or community unless it is understandable to them and they share in the planning process. Thus, widespread "ownership" of changes is critical if they are to be implemented without chaos and sustained without discomfort. Bringing about the involvement of the community and developing an environment which sustains professional growth are the major tasks of our time.

A New Fundamentalism

If the education profession is to flourish, and if schools are to be a vital force in the society, it is necessary to rebuild the school into a lifelong learning laboratory, not only for children, but for teachers as well. The improvement of staff development is not a matter of deciding how to create and implement *ad hoc* programs. Rather, it is a matter of generating a rich environment in which every education professional becomes a student of education and works continuously to improve his or her skills. Teaching is an experiment in life and must be worked on, or it will become a matter of desperate routine. The environment of the school must regenerate the relationships between teachers, learners, and community members, or the school will lose its vitality. To build the school into a learning laboratory

will be a long, slow process, but it is time for us to make the commitment and to put our energies into that process. We must not waste our energies and other resources by repeating the mistakes of the past.

The primary task in staff development is to develop a professional, growth-oriented ecology in all schools. The purposes of that strategy are three: The first is to enrich the lives of teachers and school administrators so that they continusouly expand their general education, their emotional range, and their understanding of children in the society. The second is to generate continuous efforts to improve schools. School faculties, administrators, and community members need to work together to plan ways of making their schools better, and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to bring those improvements into existence. The third is the creation of conditions which enable professional skill development to be continuous. Every teacher and administrator needs to be a student of learning and teaching. All teachers and administrators need to engage in a continuous process of experimentation with their own and their students' behavior. Each education professional needs to study alternative approaches to schooling and teaching, to select ones which will expand their capability, and to acquire the understanding and skills necessary to make fresh alternatives a part of their ongoing repertoire of professional competence.

THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

By no means does the array of available experience and research-based knowledge add up to a complete, tested paradigm either for building comprehensive staff development systems or for implementing short-term programs. It is, however, extremely important to use what is available as we seek to chart our current directions. Fortunately, much is available. We can draw on the history of the "reform movements" as well as on several recent investigations. Some of those investigations deal directly with inservice

education, while others have yielded useful information, even though they were targeted on other areas. Among the most salient recent investigations are the following:

- A nationwide survey of preservice teacher education.[11]
- A study of inservice teacher education in which the literature referred to above was reviewed exhaustively. Additionally, interviews were conducted with more than 1,500 persons concerned with staff development, and thirty position papers were commissioned and analyzed.[12]
- A study of the National Urban/Rural School Development Program, which capitalized on the energy of school-community councils to generate improvement plans and staff development activities to accompany those plans.[13]
- An extensive series of studies of teachers' thinking in classrooms.[14]
- A series of surveys of inservice teacher education practices in several states.[15]
- A study of initiatives in staff development at the federal and state levels and the impact of those initiatives in several local school sites in California.[16]
- Investigations into the relationship between teachers' psychological states and their utilization of staff development activities.[17]
- The literature on preservice and inservice training research.[18]
- The literature on organizational and curricular change in education.[19]

This list alone indicates the complexity of staff development. The substance of the studies enlarges the picture of complexity.

Resources

Although the area of staff development is in need of organizational and fiscal support, there are many resources in the field which, apparently, are not used optimally. The

more than 1,400 institutions of higher education nationwide which offer preservice teacher preparation also offer courses for inservice personnel. There are presently more than 45,000 education professors who do (or potentially could) render such service. An approximately equal number of supervisors and curriculum consultants employed by public school districts are also, at least in part, charged with rendering such service. There are thus nearly 100,000 professors and curriculum consultants available to serve the approximately two million classroom teachers in the United States. That means there is about one professor or consultant for every twenty teachers. To be sure, the professor/consultant group does not work full time to provide staff development services; there is, nonetheless, a large array of persons who bear a service relationship to education personnel. As we will see later, there is considerable dissatisfaction with the services presently being rendered by both university and school system personnel; but their numbers and their potential service cannot be denied.

In addition, there are about 100,000 principals and vice-principals employed in the 17,000 school districts in the nation. That adds one additional resource person for about every 20 classroom teachers. Many experts in inservice education suggest that one of the major tasks of building-level administrators is to help teachers grow in professional competence, or to help them organize staff development programs tailored to their needs. While inservice education has not been a major assignment of many building-level administrators, if they all spent only ten percent of their working time on staff development-related activities, the total effort would be enormous.

Finally, we must consider the nearly 50,000 nonsupervisory instructional personnel in our schools. This resource pool includes reading instructors, media and communication experts, mental health specialists, and department chairpersons. Those personnel are also expected to act (at least in part) as support personnel for teachers. In addition, teachers can become effective and powerful trainers of

one another. (In fact, research and experience suggest that most inservice education *should* be carried out by the two million education professionals who presently work in classrooms.)

Thus, already-available personnel constitute a tremendous resource. Added to these reservoirs is the vast body of alternative approaches to teaching and learning which have been generated during the last thirty years. There is no lack of things to study. Hence, there is plenty of substance to deal with, just as there are more than adequate human resources with which to approach the job.

Realities

At present, "realities"—conditions which, seemingly, no one controls—are often used as an excuse for inaction. In fact, knowledge of the realities of schooling provides us with the understanding necessary to direct our efforts deftly; in many cases, the realities give us springboards to action.

Privatism. Kevin Ryan puts it very well when he says that "teaching is the second most private social activity." Teachers traditionally teach in isolation from one another. It appears that the average teacher observes a colleague in the classroom less frequently than once every three years.[20] This norm of privatims in teaching means that many teachers have no idea about who they are professionally, or how they stack up against others. An experienced staff-development specialist says,

> In my life I regularly encounter teachers who do certain kinds of things superbly. The other day I was working with a school faculty which I knew very well. One teacher on that faculty does a particular kind of thing skillfully and fluidly, while most of the other members of the faculty labor at it awkwardly. I asked that teacher to demonstrate that practice to the others. She was very uncomfortable with my suggestion. "I'm simply not that good," she said. "But you are," I said. "I'm just an average teacher," she replied. "Well, that

may or may not be true," I replied in my turn, "But you do this particular kind of thing much better than anyone else on the faculty." She was totally reluctant to believe me. I was able to persuade her, and she was amazed at the approval she received from her fellow faculty members after her demonstration.

Because teachers do not uusually see others work, they are, for the most part, unsure about the quality of their performance. They don't know what they do well, or what they do poorly. The average teacher does some things easily with considerable skill, while other tasks require considerable labor. If faculty members could watch each other, they would have some idea of where they stand. They would also know what they could learn from each other. Furthermore, not knowing who you are or where you stand makes it difficult to have an adequate, realistic professional self-concept. Some people who are very good at some tasks are uncertain and insecure; others who are rather awkward in many dimensions of teaching think they are relatively skillful. Considerable anxiety is generated by privatism, and the loss in terms of possible learning from one another is very great.

Cynicism. Cynicism appears in two ways which cause considerable difficulty with respect to inservice education. One is the view that most inservice education is not very helpful. Thus, well-planned and effective inservice education has to struggle against the reputation of its predecessors. Second, most categories of people have little credibility as trainers. It is widely known that many teachers think that university professors do not make effective inservice educators. *Recent surveys have found that teachers have even less confidence in supervisors and building administrators as trainers.*[21] Teachers say they prefer each other as trainers. Yet teachers who have served in the training role frequently report that they have as much difficulty in establishing credibility as do persons occupying the other roles in education.[22] Ultimately, if staff development is to succeed, professionals will have to learn to trust one another

and to develop a helpful (rather than a cynical) mode of reaction.

Lack of experience with the powerful training options. One reason for the lack of confidence in inservice education is the fact that many educators have not experienced really effective and powerful training. In order to learn new strategies, teachers need to study the theory underlying strategies, to see demonstrations, to have opportunities for practice with careful feedback, and, finally, to receive coaching on-site.[23] Very few people have experience with receiving or delivering inservice education which combines all of these elements. Thus, the implementation of effective training requires a profession-wide retraining in order to learn how to deliver the more powerful options.

Developing problem-solving modalities. Faculties vary greatly with respect to the ways they work with one another. Some faculties can easily and comfortably attack problems together. More often, privatism in teaching has divided them from one another. Where a powerful problem-solving modality is developed, it is much easier to bring about curriculum redevelopment, mutuality in the study of teaching, and the support of the social climate than it is where such a modality is absent. The nature of the social system in the school has a great effect on the impact of initiatives to improve it.[24]

Initial training. The time devoted to the clinical aspects of preservice teacher education is incredibly short.[25] The clinical experiences which teachers receive (that is, the combinations of professional courses and student teaching) occupy only between sixteen and twenty-six weeks of full-time training. That is substantially less than the time allotted to training for most of the simpler trades, such as hairdressing. In addition, teacher education programs generally do not articulate the theoretical and problem-related components of the profession. The theory which is studied is often not seen in practice, and many student teachers do not get a chance to try out the ideas presented in their theory or methods courses. Teachers learn to teach on-the-job, and

the on-the-job conditions are both demanding and chaotic. Thus, the level of skill which most teachers achieve depends upon their independent ability to solve problems in a given situation, rather than upon the benefits of a full-scale professional training program. Very few teachers know about the alternative models of teaching available to them; nor do they have on-the-job assistance in mastering those models.

Pressures toward normative teaching. In addition, there are considerable pressures for teachers to teach within the recitation style that dominates the education profession.[26] Experimenting with alternatives is a risky business. For one thing, teachers' performance initially suffers when they explore a new teaching strategy. They are less comfortable with the new than they were with the old.[27] Second, students are uncomfortable with any novel approach to teaching; they tend to pressure teaching back toward the more familiar modalities. Finally, fellow teachers and community members are suspicious of the awkwardness in performance which comes with trying out new strategies. It must be remembered that *initial awkwardness is a condition of the acquisition of a new teaching approach.* A social climate that encourages risk-taking and provides a protective haven in which to experiment with teaching is essential in order to combat these pressures. Otherwise, such pressures will strip the profession of the lively alternatives in favor of the normative mode.

Self-concepts. Like all other human beings, teachers have self-concepts. Persons who are in the self-actualizing stage reach out to develop themselves and to explore alternatives with their students. Persons at a survival- or competency-orientation stage tend not to reach out. It is essential that the environment of the school attempt to pull professionals toward a self-actualizing state.[28]

Organizational behavior. School personnel are members of organizations; the health of their organization greatly affects both the effectiveness of individuals and the vigor of collective activity. A number of investigations of the social

systems of schools have indicated that, unless a faculty (and, in fact, faculty, administration, and community) operates in a constructive, problem-solving mode which supports experimental behavior, innovative ideas will flounder. In many cases, the human systems in schools and school-community coalitions are in need of tremendous improvement. The informal systems in some schools make risk-taking a lonely business. Without the development of a warm, supportive—and yet rigorous—social climate, experimentation with curriculum and teaching is almost impossible.

These are the realities; staff development programs must overcome privatism, develop a self-actualizing ecology within a problem-solving mode, develop the capability to use the more powerful training modalities, and radiate a sturdy resistance to the pressures which confine teaching to normative activities centered on traditional approaches.

IDEAS: PROPOSITIONS FOR ACTION

Everyone Must Be a Student of Teaching

A central concern of those who seek to improve staff development must be the development of an ecology within which every teacher and school administrator is a student of teaching in a public, cumulative fashion. However competent teachers are, they, like actors, need to study their profession regularly. They need to look for new options, to polish the skills they possess, to develop new skills, to rethink the curriculum of the schools in which they work, and to learn how to make the learning environments of those schools more powerful.[29]

Applying Available Research on Training

Research on training has progressed to the point where working hypotheses for program construction are now available:

> The first message from that research is very positive; teachers are wonderful learners. Nearly all teachers can acquire new skills that "fine tune" their compe-

tence. They can also learn a considerable repertoire of teaching strategies that are new to them.

The second message is more sobering, but still optimistic: in order to improve their skills and learn new approaches to teaching, teachers need certain conditions—conditions that are not common in most inservice settings, even when teachers participate in the governance of those settings.

The third message is also encouraging: the research base reveals what conditions help teachers to learn. This information can be used to design staff development activities for classroom personnel.[30]

The "conditions" referred to above consist of five training elements, or components, which can be combined variously. If all five are combined, there is a high probability that there will be satisfaction with the training. Further, there is also a high probability that the skills which are its objective will transfer into the active working repertoire of the professional. Those elements are:

- Presentation of theory, or description of skill or strategy;
- Modeling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching;
- Structured and open-ended feedback (provision of information about perfromance); and
- Coaching for application (hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom).

The most effective training activities, then, will be those that combine theory, modeling, practice, feedback, and coaching to application. The knowledge base seems firm enough that we can predict that if those components are in fact combined in inservice programs, we can expect the outcomes to be considerable at all levels.[31]

Everyone Must Be a Trainer

If the more powerful training options are to be im-

plemented, teachers must become trainers of one another. The present inservice education investment is in the implementation of training programs of relatively low power.[32] This investment has to be moved to building capability—helping everyone to learn to study theory, to demonstrate, to organize and carry on practice and feedback, and, of critical importance, to coach one another in the classroom. The manpower pool which is most appropriate to coaching is teachers themselves. An investment in the development of their capability to do such coaching is vital to the development of a productive staff development ecology.

Sharing Power Increases Power

Both the recent Rand Corporation studies[33] of federally-funded programs designed to generate local innovative power and the evaluation of the Urban/Rural School Development Program point to the importance of collaboration among teachers, administrators, and community members. Such collaboration points toward both the improvement of schools and the creation of vital environments for professional growth.

It is not only essential to establish coalitions of community members and professionals, but also to equip such coalitions to engage in the study of organizational behavior. Teachers, administrators, and community members can effectively study the human systems to which they belong. Further, they can, if they will, systematically improve those systems. Organizational development theory is one source of substance for such study. While it does not provide complete, sure-fire formulas for making organizations perfect, its concepts and knowledge provide a strong framework from which to begin.

Hence, curriculum changes occur within a social system. The organization needs to study itself and the means by which to make itself more effective and supportive. It must also take a realistic view of where energy is needed if changes are to be brought about.

Fullan and Pomfret (1977) have made a number of recent, very careful analyses of curriculum implementation efforts. The results of that work provide us with the beginnings of a differentiated view about the relative ease and difficulty of bringing about various aspects of curriculum change. The research confirms the position that many curriculum plans achieve only partial implementation. However, they have gone beyond that general finding to help us identify the kinds of curricular elements which are most likely to be implemented, as well as the degree to which they are likely to be implemented. They found that materials related to instruction and administrative procedure are the most likely elements to achieve a fairly high degree of implementation. Changes in instructional processes are *least* likely to be implemented. Those aspects of plans which depend on instructional processes will probably achieve only low levels of implementation, unless there is a very high level of inservice training, and unless the organizational climate is exceptionally supportive.

Hall and Loucks (1980) work has added to this growing body of literature by studying the "levels of use" of innovations. Their research also indicates quite clearly that we cannot expect to have high utilization of innovations which are introduced into the system unless a plan is accompanied by considerable amounts of strongly organized and implemented staff development, as well as an organizational commitment that extends from community to teachers to administrators.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

The most important steps which must be taken to improve staff development efforts are (1) the decision to redirect the investment of personnel and material resources toward the reconstruction of the ecology of the school; and (2) building cooperation between teachers, school administrators, staff developers, university personnel, and community members. In order to achieve those steps, several longer-term changes must be brought about which

capitalize on our experience and the very real research base which we presently possess.

Governance

The first necessary change is in governance. We must establish school-community councils which bring together teachers, school administrators, and community members in each local school or cluster of schools. Such councils must be prepared to and actually engage in the process of school improvement and the redevelopment of inservice training.

Training

The second necessary change is in training itself. We must create a profession-wide movement to help all personnel increase their capability to use the more powerful training options. The preparation of teachers and local building administrators to engage in the continuous, vital coaching process is critical.

The Faculty as a Self-Study Unit

Third, each faculty must engage in the study of the environments they live in, determining ways to improve their environment and building relationships around a self-actualizing norm. A divided profession cannot survive. Each faculty must seek ways to break down classroom privatism and the divisions that presently exist between teachers and school administrators. Each faculty must create a climate in which risk-taking and problem-solving are the norm. Within that environment, supported by the school-community council, they should develop a continuous school improvement plan.

Job-Embedded Inservice

Finally, job-embedded approaches must be developed for inservice education. The time necessary to study teaching could be built into the school calendar so that teams can engage in the study of one another's teaching, at the same time carrying out the crucial coaching element. University

and district personnel can bring new ideas to the school and help teachers learn to train each other. Education is an experiment in living which brings the teacher and the learner together to explore the limits of their possibilities and to find meaningful lives in their society. The ecology of the school must be shaped to form a climate in which teachers and learners try on the rich array of approaches to learning which are our legacy from the past. From that experience, we can create the new schools of tomorrow, our own legacy to the society of the future.

SUMMARY

The bottom-line task of the Teacher Corps is to help in the creation of exciting, effective schools. That can only be done after considering the alternative missions which schools might achieve and the kinds of curricular and instructional processes which will be most likely to get the job done. Years ago, Lawrence Downey said that the school teaches in three ways: By what it teaches, by how it teaches, and by the kind of place it is. Reforming a school requires the careful selection of substance, the consideration of alternative ways of teaching, and, perhaps most important, the creation of the kind of social climate that makes a school the kind of place it is, a vital force in the lives of children. The coalitions described here, if they are successful, will continuously study alternative missions for their school, alternative ways of teaching, and alternative social climates. They will experiment, recognizing that change is not easy to bring about; they will know that the early stages of change are awkward—that those stages require the utmost support of the risk-taking behavior which is essential if those changes are to persist.

The most challenging task is to change the permanent organization, to make it a truly collaborative place in which problem-solving is a dominant norm and the improvement of the school is the focus. *That* is what must be institutionalized! If such a fundamental change is brought about, if the mind-sets and organizational structures in edu-

cational institutions can be recast to support a posture of innovation, experimentation, and sometimes-risky improvement, then the demonstration function can be achieved. Then schools can become learning laboratories, places where the continuous process of school improvement is studied and shared.

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